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## RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEST ANXIETY AND EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IMO STATE

BY

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### Abstract

*The study examined the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among public secondary school students in Imo State. Three research questions and three null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. Relevant literature were reviewed is under conceptual review, theoretical framework and review of empirical studies. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study consisted of 22,331 SSII students in the 456 public secondary schools in Imo State. The sample comprised 600 students. Stratified random sampling techniques was used to draw the sample. The instruments for data collection were two adapted questionnaires, titled Test Anxiety Questionnaire (TAQ), and Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (EMQ). The instruments were subjected to face validation. Cronbach Alpha method was used to determine the reliability of the instruments. The result gave co-efficient value of 0.85 for Test Anxiety Questionnaire (TAQ), and 0.83 for Examination Malpractice Questionnaire (EMQ). Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions while test of significance of Pearson was used to test the hypotheses at 0 .05 level of significance. The study revealed, that there was a low positive relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice. The study also indicated a low positive relationship between male and female students' test anxiety and examination malpractice. Finally, the study revealed a low positive relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among urban and rural based students in public secondary schools in Imo State. The study recommended among other that the services of a Guidance*

*Counsellor should be engaged in secondary schools in Imo state to ensure that students' receive regular guidance and counseling with regard to their reading habits and tests/examinations behaviours to avoid falling victims of anxiety during test/examinations.*

**Keywords:** Test Anxiety, Examination Malpractice, Secondary School, and Students.

## Introduction

Education has been considered the world over as tool for transforming the individual and society for the better. It is concerned with inculcating worth- while behaviour into the individuals to make them become useful not only to themselves but also to the society at large. It is a necessary process through which young adults are equipped to lead productive lives according to their talents and interests. It is a means that allows the individual to climb up the socio-economic ladder in the society. Through education individuals are trained, taught and adequately guided to acquire relevant skills and knowledge that will enable them become useful individuals in the society.

Furthermore, education presupposes learning, and when the learning process inherent in education works well, and real learning occurs, learners are expected to have attained as well as demonstrated a certain level of academic attainment which is usually measured through examination and /or test. To this end, Onovo (2017) explained that test or

examination is used to evaluate the extent to which students' have learnt what the teacher had taught in the classroom. He maintained that evaluating what the students had learnt in secondary schools is done in a number of ways which include: written and oral tests, doing presentations, home-work and participating in class activities and discussions. Tests are usually administered to determine the extent to which set objectives are achieved. This in itself makes students' academic achievement very significant and important for the learner, school and society. Odika (2014) affirmed that determining what the students have learnt is a central focal point for the society due to the idea that ensuring an education for a child helps promote a more successful future as job opportunities, and financial compensation for that individual. The resultant effect of this is, that students in secondary schools tend to take issues of test and examination rather too desperately, resulting in tension, stress, fear, sometimes culminating in examination malpractice.

Examination is defined as an assessment and evaluation tool which helps to reveal the outcome of teaching-learning process. Agunbiade and Ajayi (2018), it is a statement of fact that every examination has rules and regulations which students are expected to comply with. Therefore, students' actions that negate examinations rules and regulations pose great threat to the certainty, validity and reliability of examination result. Breaking examination rules can be called examination malpractice. The Examination Malpractice Act of 1999 described examination malpractice 'as any act of omission or commission by a person who in participation of, before, during or after any examination fraudulently secures any unfair advantage for himself or any other person in such a manner that contravenes the rules and regulations to the extent of undermining the validity, reliability, authenticity of the examination and ultimately the integrity of the certificate issued (Agunbiade & Ajayi, 2018). They also maintained that examination malpractice is any irregular behaviour that goes against examination rules and regulations exhibited by a candidate or anybody charged with the conduct of examination before, during or after examination. Examination has rules that proceeds and guides its administration and students are expected to comply strictly with the laid down

rules. Animasahun and Ogunniran (2014) stated that examination malpractice is an act that contravenes the rules and regulation of examination in a particular period of time.

Examination malpractice therefore, refers to acts of wrong doings, misconducts, dishonesty or improper practices associated with examinations or tests for personal gain, or the violation of rules and regulations of examination for personal gain or advantage (Ifeakor&Ukozor, 2016). They added that when these rules guiding its conduct are subverted in whatever form, the outcome of it will be invalid and will not be a true reflection of what the learner had actually achieved. This act is technically referred to as examination malpractice or examination misconduct. Whenever there is examination malpractice, the validity and resulting outcome becomes questionable. Relatively, examination malpractice tends to confer undue advantage or undeserved grade to the perpetrators of the act. Secondary school students; whether in urban or rural setup, at the junior or senior class levels, whether of the male or female gender seem to have been found to indulge in examination malpractice. Onyibe, et al. (2015) maintained that instances of examination malpractices can vary according to the demographics of the students as just

mentioned and can come in variety of forms ranging from impersonation, leakage of test or examination questions, tampering with recorded results before their publication, copying from fellow examinees, inscribing already answered questions of information on body parts or on the clothe materials of candidates, smuggling answers into the examination arena, computer fraud and the use of mobile phones to fraudulently obtain answers to examination questions, fraudulent practices relating to collusion with invigilators among others.

Anzene (2014) affirmed that there are common types of examination malpractices which may include but not limited to: collusion among students by sharing answers among themselves and between them and the invigilators, impersonation whereby mercenaries are hired to sit for examinations in place of the genuine or real candidates, giraffing whereby students sitting for examinations elongate their necks to enable them copy from their colleagues sitting in their front, back or from those on their sides, smuggling out questions and smuggling in written answers into the examination halls, use of electronic devices which may include; mobile phones, scientific calculators, organizers, and similar gadgets to obtain answers during examinations, bribery of teachers and or

invigilators with money to enhance marks and opportunities to overlook indulgence in malpractice behaviours without sanction and intimidation or assault on the teachers or invigilators to pave way for examination malpractices (Onyibe, et al. 2015). Examination malpractice has become a common occurrence in Nigeria's educational system. Causes of examination malpractices have been identified by Petters and Ukpong (2018) as craze for certificates, desire of parents to have their children in choice professions and universities, pressure on students to pursue courses which they have no aptitude, pressure on teachers who want to gain favour of students and overcrowded sitting arrangements beside fear of failure. They related the increasing cases of examination malpractice to poor teaching, ineffective preparation by students, ill-equipped library facilities, and dubious admission policy.

Consequences of examination malpractices have always come with many unpleasant or negative effects on the individual and society. Onyibe, et al. (2015) warned that examination malpractice has grave consequences on the individuals and institution of learning, communities and the country at large. Dismissal, termination, loss of position, and lack of self-confidence are some of

the negative effects of examination malpractice these have caused a lot of embarrassment and suffering to individuals, families and the nation. The guilty ones who were not caught and punished cannot defend the certificates procured not to talk of delivering at their duty posts. They added that examination malpractice leads to irreversible loss of credibility. A country that becomes notorious in examination malpractice loses international credibility. The implication is that documents or certificates emanating from such country will be treated with suspicion as in the case of Nigeria today. Examination malpractice is a vice which inculcates dishonesty, mediocrity, immorality and fraud on a relatively permanent basis in those who practice it. Although examination malpractice has become widespread at all levels of education in Nigeria, students' attitude towards it may greatly determine their likelihood to indulge in the crime or not Anierobi et al (2016). Thus, students' attitude may influence their views, feelings and opinions about examination malpractice. Consequently, people who have negative attitude towards examination malpractice may view it as a crime, and possibly refrain from the act. In the other hand, people who show positive attitude towards examination malpractice may view it as a worthwhile behaviour, and

this could make them susceptible to the maladaptive act. One possible factor that may correlate with students' attitude towards examination malpractice is test anxiety.

Test anxiety is referred to as a state of uneasiness, worry or feeling of uncertainty about impending or ongoing evaluation programme such as test or examination. It is a type of performance anxiety that makes students feel terrified about tests. Eremie and Ikpa (2020) defined test anxiety as a kind of self-preoccupation which is manifested with self minimization and uncertainty about abilities of oneself and results in negative cognitive evaluation, lack of concentration, unfavourable physiological reactions and academic failure. In a similar way, Ajayi (2018) defined test anxiety as a state of uneasiness, worry or feeling of uncertainty about an impending or on-going evaluation programme. Brooks, et al. (2015) defined test anxiety as a debilitating response to examinations that often torments students.. Tests and examinations often bring to bear on the individual, a certain level of uncertainty which causes tension in the person being examined and can lead to behaviours bordering on examination misconduct. Test anxiety is a major that leads students to engage in examination malpractices.



Test anxiety emerges when tests are seen as threat instead of prognostic, predictive and remedial measures (Nwosu, et al. 2017). This is worsened in case scenarios in which passing examinations is seen as major gateway to success in life. In such situations there could be heightened emotions that lead to examination malpractice. Studies show that lack of confidence which is related to test anxiety is associated to examination malpractice (Naliaka, et al. 2015), test anxiety is significantly positively related to students' tendency to participate in examination malpractice (Nwosu, et al. 2017), and students' attitude towards examination malpractice. Students' perception on examination malpractice could be affected by their level of text anxiety going by distortion it could cause in the working memory during examinations.

The popular phrase "examination fever" tends to indicate the incidence of examination or tests anxiety among secondary school students in Nigeria (Saad & Yakubu, 2018). Students are usually subjected to tests and examinations determining their accomplishments in the three major domains of learning namely: cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Nevertheless, on the part of the students,

examinations and tests are often viewed with varying degrees of anxiety and anxiousness. Fear of failure, forgetfulness, and lack of readiness, among others, are factors that can induce test anxiety in students. Studies have shown that high level of examination anxiety leads to examination malpractice and poor academic achievement (Uma & Ibina, 2015). Typically, students who have high examination anxiety tend to perform poorly in academic work due to their lack of knowledge in the subject matter as well as the cognitive distraction created by task-irrelevant thinking in the examination situation. Test anxiety may also lead students to start thinking of dubious means of scaling through examinations. Test anxiety involves four main components; cognitive, emotionality, behavioural, and physical components. The cognitive component is the mental activity that revolves around the testing situation. It constitutes elements such as thinking about the consequences of failure, racing thoughts, negative and worrisome thoughts, problem in recalling facts, difficulty in reading and understanding questions among others. The emotionality component is characterized by tension, fear, apprehension, and nervousness towards test or examinations, which is usually associated with somatic symptom such as palpitation, nausea, perspiration,

headaches stomach aches, diarrhea, excessive sweating, rapid heartbeat, dry mouth, and shortness of breath.

The behavioural component involves fidgeting, feeling restlessness among others, while the physical component is characterized by poor study skills, avoidance and procrastination of work and physical discomfort (Balogun, et al. 2017). Eremie and Ikpa (2020) maintained that factors contributing to the development of test anxiety in students according to the cognitive school of thought may include; fear of failure, consistent poor academic achievement, past experiences and beliefs, lack of confidence in one's ability and forgetfulness among many others. Test anxiety could affect secondary school students in urban and rural locations, students in junior and senior classes, and male and female students in different ways. In general, there appears to be a link between test anxiety and examination malpractice. It has been noted that between 25 to 40 percent of students experience test anxiety and that students who experience high level of test anxiety are more likely to perform poorly academically (Balogun, et al. 2017). Arguably, this tends to make indulgence in examination malpractice an attractive option to this category of students thereby suggesting a likelihood of a relationship

between test anxiety and examination malpractice. It has been argued that people with test anxiety stand to be forgetful; that such people have difficulties storing and remembering information and/or facts thereby creating the likelihood of poor academic performance. Eremie and Ikpa (2020) affirmed that there is a significant relationship between low affective tension and examination malpractices among secondary school students. Fear of failure can create anxiety in the learner, making concentration difficult.

Test or examination anxiety can create fears in students as to lower the quality of their academic achievement and output. This can lead to the unscrupulous behaviour of seeking for short-cuts to success. This unscrupulous behaviours of seeking for short-cuts among secondary students' during tests or examinations seems not to be gender based nor bound by school location but could be found among both sexes (male and female) in both urban and rural schools. Whether a school is located in a rural or urban setting could also influence examination malpractice among the students. There are urban-rural social and psychological factors that can influence the behaviour of students that may or may not make them vulnerable to examination malpractice. Secondary schools are located in both

rural and urban environments. Students attend these schools despite some obvious disparities of the environments in terms of infrastructural development, language and culture. Nevertheless, it must not be overemphasized that not only school location influences the relationship between examination malpractices among secondary school students'; gender also seems to exert certain influence in this regard.

Gender could also have effect on students' examination malpractice behaviours. Examination misconduct constructs is likely to affect male and female students differently. Gender can therefore become a strong predictor as to how a student reacts to the issues of examination malpractice in school. Health and criminal behaviour in a school setting may not be the same for males and females. Gender refers to socially constructed differences between male and female. Studies conducted across the world among the students studying in different levels of education have been found to suggest significant differences in the academic performance of male and female students (Mankumari & Ajay, 2017). This implies that, whether a student is male or female could influence their attitude and behaviour toward challenging academic situations that could induce examination malpractice.

Considering the problem of examination malpractices, the rate at which student faint or fall sick during examination, and many other anxiety related problems in schools, it become necessary to find out the age and gender of the students and look at their anxiety levels. Studies have shown that high level of examination anxiety leads to examination malpractice and poor academic achievement (Onyibe et al. 2015). Typically, student who have high test/ examination anxiety tend to perform poorly in academic work due to their lack of knowledge in the subject matter as well as the cognitive distraction created by task-irrelevant thinking in the examination situation. Test anxiety may also lead students to start thinking of dubious means of scaling through examination. Although studies such as: Psychosocial correlates of examination malpractices among secondary school students (Ekeh & Oladayo, 2016); Cognitive test anxiety and examination malpractices among senior secondary school students in Rivers State (Eremie & Ikpa, 2020) and Peer influence and self-esteem as correlates of secondary school students' attitude towards examination malpractice in Anambra State (Anierobi, et al, 2019) have been conducted in the afore mentioned States in Nigeria,

However, there is little empirical evidence in Nigerian showing the



relationship between test anxiety and their tendency to cheat in examination in spite of the fact that one who is test anxious may be tempted to cheat in order to remedy the perceived retrieval, storing and processing deficiencies (Cassady, 2014). There is the hope that if the relationship is established, a better psychoeducational intervention could be mounted for students so as to reduce their involvement in examination malpractices. To the best of researchers' knowledge, no study has examined the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria. It is therefore against this background that this study sought to examine the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among public secondary schools in Imo State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Examination malpractice has many negative effects on the individual and society. These include but not limited to: dismissal, termination of studentship, loss of position in the school structure, and lack of self-confidence on the part of the students. The guilty students who were able to escape being caught and punished cannot defend the certificates procured not to talk of delivering at their duty posts.

Also, examination malpractice leads to irreversible loss of credibility.

A country that becomes notorious in examination malpractice loses international credibility. The implication is that documents or certificates emanating from such country will be treated with suspicion. Examination malpractice has often ruined the education career of some of the students caught and expelled from school for their involvement in the dastardly act. Another negative effect of examination malpractice is that it has the ability to corrupt the characters of students that indulge in it thereby, turning them into criminals for the rest of their lives.

Again, many researchers have indicated that many factors including anxiety, students' gender, school location and poor morals, among others could be at play in determining involvement in examination malpractices among secondary school students. However, many of such studies were conducted few years ago, many were conducted outside Nigeria while few conducted in Nigeria did not seem to have resolved the question of relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice particularly, in terms of school location and gender in the area of the study. This is the motivation for the study which was set out to investigate the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice

among secondary school students in Imo State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among public secondary school students in Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SS11 students in public secondary schools in Imo State.
2. Determine the relationship between test and examination malpractice among male and female SS11 students in public secondary schools in Imo State.
3. Examine the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among urban and rural based SS11 students in public secondary schools in Imo State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

3. What is the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SS11 students in public secondary schools in Imo State?
4. What is the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among male and female SS11 students

in public secondary schools in Imo State?

5. What is the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SS11 urban and rural based students in public secondary schools in Imo State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

9. There is no significant relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SS11 students in public secondary schools in Imo State.
10. There is no significant relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among male and female SS11 students in public secondary schools in Imo State.
11. There is no significant relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SS11 urban and rural based students in public secondary schools in Imo State.

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a correlational research design for this study. According to Ifeakor (2018), correlational studies indicate the direction and magnitude of the relationship between the variables.

The use of correlational design for this study is appropriate as the study seeks to establish the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among secondary school students in Imo State, Nigeria. The area of the study is Imo State. Imo State has 27 local government areas which are further divided into six Education Zones which include: Okigwe Education Zone 1, Okigwe Education Zone 2, Owerri Education Zone 1, Owerri Education Zone 2, Orlu Education Zone 1 and Orlu Education Zone 2. The population of the study comprised of 22, 331 SS II students' in the 456 secondary schools in the six Education Zones of Imo State, comprising 11,875 females and 10,456 males. The sample size is 600 SS II students. (270 male, 330 female; with 348 in urban schools and 252 in rural schools). Stratified random sampling technique and simple random sampling technique was employed to draw the sample. Simple random sampling without replacement was used to draw two school from each zone, making it a total of 12 schools. Then stratified random sampling was employed to draw 50 students from each of the selected schools. Stratification was based on gender and school. Two instruments were used for the study. The first instrument was Test Anxiety Questionnaire (TAQ) developed by Nist and Diehi (1990). The instrument is made

up of two sections; A and B. section A sought demographic information of the respondents such as gender and location of the school while section B which contained 15 items elicited information on test anxiety of the students. The items were placed on 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The second instrument was Examination Malpractice Questionnaire developed by Arjen (2005) and adapted by the researcher. The instrument contained 15 items which elicited information on examination malpractice of the respondents. The items were placed on 4-point scale of Always (A), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R) and Never (N). The ranges of scores were weighted as 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively.

The instrument was validated by two experts in Guidance and Counselling and an expert in Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Educational Foundations, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents with the help of three research assistants. Out of 600 copies of instruments administered 400 copies were correctly filled representing about 66.7% returned rate used for analysis. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Coefficient and average coefficient values of 0.85 for Test

Anxiety Inventory and 0.83 for Examination Malpractice Questionnaire are considered highly reliable and suitable for the study. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions, while test of significance for correlation was used to test the hypotheses at 0 .05 level of significance. The

To ascertain whether the relationship is significant, probability value (p-value) was used. Where an obtained p-value was equal or less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected which implies there was a significant relationship between the variables. However, where obtained p-value was greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis was not rejected which implied that the relationship between the two variables was not significant.

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII students in public secondary school in Imo state?

**Table 1: Pearson's Correlation between Test Anxiety and Examination Malpractices Among SSII Students in Public Secondary Schools in Imo**

	N	Test Anxiety	Examination Malpractice	Remark
Test Anxiety	580	1	.31	Low positive relationship
Examination Malpractice	580	.31	1	

Table 1 displays the result of the Pearson's correlation between test anxiety and examination malpractice of SSII students in public secondary schools in Imo state. A correlation coefficient (r) of .31 was obtained. This value indicates that there was a low positive relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII students in public secondary schools in Imo state. This implies that as test anxiety increases, students' examination malpractice also increases but a low rate.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among male and female SSII students in public secondary school in Imo State?

**Table 2: Pearson's Correlation between Test Anxiety and Examination Malpractices Among Male and Female SSII Students in Public Secondary Schools in Imo**

Variables	N	Test Anxiety	Examination Malpractice	Remark
<b>Male:</b>				
Test Anxiety	258	1	.38	Low positive relationship
Examination Malpractice	258	.38	1	
<b>Female:</b>				
Test Anxiety	322	1	.20	Low positive relationship
Examination Malpractice	322	.20	1	

As shown in Table 2, the Pearson's correlation between test anxiety and examination malpractice among male SSII students in public secondary schools in Imo state was .38 while that of the female was .20. Although the correlation between the two variables was stronger among the male students compared to the females, the relationship for the two groups was low positive relationship. This implies that as test anxiety increases, examination malpractice also increases among male and female SSII students, however, the rate of this increase in low compared to the male students.

**Research Question 3:** What is the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII urban and rural based students in public secondary school in Imitate?

**Table 3: Pearson's Correlation between Test Anxiety and Examination Malpractices Among SSII Urban and Rural Based Students in Public Secondary Schools in Imo**

Variables	N	Test Anxiety	Examination Malpractice	Remark
<b>Urban:</b>				
Test Anxiety	249	1	.28	Low positive relationship
Examination Malpractice	249	.28	1	
<b>Rural:</b>				



Test Anxiety	331	1	.29	
				Low positive relationship
Examination Malpractice	331	.29	1	

The result displayed in Table 3 shows that the Pearson’s correlation between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII students in urban public secondary schools in Imo state was .28 whereas the correlation between the two variables among SSII students in rural public secondary was .29. The r values were comparable and indicate that there was a low positive relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII students in urban and those rural public secondary schools in Imo state.

### Test of Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII students in public secondary schools in Imo State.

**Table 4: Test of Significance of Pearson’s Correlation between Test Anxiety and Examination Malpractices among SSII Students in Public Secondary Schools in Imo**

Variables	N	Test Anxiety	Examination Malpractice	p-value	Remark
Test Anxiety	580	1	.31	.000	Significant
Examination Malpractice	580	.31	1		

The result displayed in table 4 shows there was a significant possible relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SS II students in public secondary schools in public secondary schools in Imo State,  $r = .31, p < 0.05$ . Since p-value is less than 0.05 the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among male and female SSII students in public secondary schools in Imo State.

**Table 5: Test of Significance of Pearson’s Correlation between Test Anxiety and Examination Malpractices Among Male and Female SSII Students in Public Secondary Schools in Imo**

Variables	N	Test Anxiety	Examination Malpractice	p-value	Remark
<b>Male:</b>					
Test Anxiety	258	1	.38	0.000	Significant
Examination Malpractice	258	.38	1		
<b>Female:</b>					
Test Anxiety	322	1	.20	0.000	Significant
Examination Malpractice	322	.20	1		

As displayed in table 5, there was a significant positive relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among male SS II students in public secondary schools in Imo State,  $r = .38$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Likewise the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among female students in Imo State was significant,  $r = .20$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Since the p-values were less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII urban and rural based students in public secondary schools in Imo State.

**Table 6: Test of Significance of Pearson’s Correlation between Test Anxiety and Examination Malpractices Among SSII Urban and Rural Based Students in Public Secondary Schools in Imo**

Variables	N	Test Anxiety	Examination Malpractice	p-value	Remark
<b>Urban:</b>					
Test Anxiety	249	1	.28	.000	Significant
Examination Malpractice	249	.28	1		

<b>Rural:</b>					
Test Anxiety	331	1	.29	.000	Significant
Examination Malpractice	331	.29	1		

The result displayed in table 6 shows there was a significant positive relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among urban based SSII students in Imo State,  $r = .29$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . Since the p-value were less than 0.05 the null hypothesis was rejected.

### Discussion

The findings on the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII students in public secondary school in Imo state revealed that there was a low positive relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII students in public secondary schools in Imo State. The result of the null hypothesis table indicated a significant relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII students in public secondary schools in Imo State. The findings are in consonance with the results of Aiingona (2022), Agunbiade and Ajayi (2018) Olusola (2022) who found a significant relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among the students.

The possible reason for a significant relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice could be that students experiencing test

anxiety often seen failure and the negative consequences it may have on their academic standing, future opportunities, or self-esteem. To cope with this fear, they might resort to malpractice, believing it to be a guilder and more reliable way to achieve success. In addition, students with test anxiety may doubt their abilities and competence. This self doubt can lead them to believe that they cannot achieve good results through honest effort and study, pushing them towards malpractice of means to compensate for their perceived inadequacies.

The findings on the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among male and female SSII students in public secondary school in Imo State showed a low positive relationship between male and female students' test anxiety and their examination malpractice. The findings of corresponding hypothesis in table 5

revealed a significant relationship between male and female students' test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII students in public secondary schools in Imo State.

This is in line with the findings of Olusola (2022) Aydin (2019) which revealed a positive relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice of male and female students.

The possible reason for a significant possible relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice of male and female students of could be the pressure to perform well on examinations, students who experience high levels of test anxiety often feel overwhelmed by the need to achieve high grades, leading them to engage in malpractice as a means to ensure success. Additionally, the fear of failure associated with test anxiety can motivate students to engage in unethical practices to avoid negative consequences.

The findings on the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII urban and rural based students in public secondary school in Imo State showed a low positive relationship between rural and urban students' test anxiety and their examination malpractice. The findings of the corresponding null hypothesis showed based significant positive relationship between rural and urban based students'

test anxiety and examination malpractice among SSII students in public secondary schools in Imo state. These findings are in agreement to the findings of Atsehe, et al. (2022) Anagbogu and Bichere (2024) which found a significant positive relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice based on school location.

The possible reason for this result could be that students in the urban schools may face intense academic competition and high expectations, leading to heightened anxiety and a greater propensity to cheat, while students in rural areas may lack access to academic support, increasing anxiety levels and prompting them to resort to malpractice as a copying mechanism.

## **Conclusion**

The study was conducted to determine the relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice among senior secondary school students in Imo State. Based on the findings of the study, the study concluded that there was a low positive relationship between test anxiety and examination malpractice of SSII students in public secondary schools in Imo State.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, it is recommended that:

3. School administrators should organize workshops and seminars on relaxation technique, time management ethical behaviour and emotional regulation. These can be integrated into school wellness programmes to help students cope with the pressures of examination.
4. The services of a Guidance Counsellor should be engaged in secondary schools in Imo state to ensure that

students' receive regular guidance and counseling with regard to their reading habits and tests/examinations behaviours to avoid falling victims of anxiety in general and test/examinations anxiety in particular that could lead them to examination misconduct.

5. Teachers should employ a variety of assessment strategies to reduce the pressure of high-states examination in both urban and rural areas. This should include formative.

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